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LEOPOLD ZUNZ.¹

THE first-fruits of genuine criticism of Jewish Literature produced in the nineteenth century constituted the offering which Leopold Zunz, while yet young in years, but already of mature intellect, laid on the altar of Jewish science. It is certainly true that already, in an earlier generation, that of Moses Mendelssohn, the buds of knowledge had begun to spring up among the Jews in Germany; but Mendelssohn and his contemporaries left sufficient work for posterity. They had but slight occasion and scanty opportunities for critical researches into Jewish history and literature. In both these departments Zunz may be pronounced the pioneer. He not only conferred a great boon on his people by showing them the path to the rediscovery of the innumerable gems of thought buried in their literature; he also rendered them an equally great service by demonstrating to the Gentile world that the text, "It is your wisdom and understanding in the sight of the peoples," was not empty of meaning. He rolled away the reproach, so frequently uttered by Christian scholars,

¹ [It will interest our readers to know that the writer of this Essay, author of the famous work *Dor dor Vedoreshov*, celebrated his eightieth birthday in the February of this year. This will be a fitting opportunity to add one more to the numerous congratulations which he has received.—ED.]

that the Jews have no critical science. The first essay, which he composed in his early youth, is entitled, *An Inquiry into Rabbinical Literature*.¹ Though the first-fruits of his study, its style is ripe and perfect as that of a veteran writer. He endeavours to define the subjects on which attention should be concentrated in order to bring to the surface the many priceless pearls to be found in the sea of Jewish literature. He particularises the preliminary studies requisite for the building up of a sound and thorough Jewish criticism. If we examine in detail the undertakings which he urges upon the scholars of his time, we shall find that they comprehend all those departments which have successfully engaged the Jewish intellect ever since Zunz threw light upon the paths and methods of inquiry; and, therefore, he may well claim to be styled the original worker in this field, and the guide to his many successors. He was not, however, merely a sign-post to others. He himself carried out the advice he gave, and took a leading part in the Jewish critical labours of the nineteenth century.

Soon after he had published his first essay, he tried his strength in biographical composition, and presented the world with a sketch of the life of one who was a brilliant light to the Jews in the Middle Ages, Rabbi Solomon Yizchaki (Rashi). This essay was a lesson to biographers in their art; though many before him had endeavoured to write lives of our great men, yet, lacking the critical faculty, they omitted, on the one hand, many important points, while, on the other, they gave currency to statements which were doubtful, and even spurious. But a biography like Zunz's, written in a spirit of scientific criticism, had never hitherto appeared. From this point of view, Zunz may be said to have been the first Jewish biographer, and his efforts served as patterns and models

¹ This essay was published in 1818. I did not know of its existence till many years after, when the late Rabbi J. L. Polack showed it to me. It was reprinted in the edition of his collected works issued in 1875.

to others. I feel no hesitation in affirming that Zunz's life of Rashi acted as an incentive to Rappoport to try his hand at work of a similar character. The latter printed biographical notices of various scholars in the *Bikure Ha-ittim*. Anyone who penetrates into the spirit of these articles will recognise that Zunz's method served—considerably modified, however—as Rappoport's guide. It is ridiculous to suppose that both savants hit on the same plans independently of one another; for when Rappoport wrote his biographies he had already before him Zunz's life of Rashi. Indeed, in his biography of R. Nathan, author of the *Aruch* (note 47), Rappoport explicitly refers to Zunz, whose arguments he attempts to refute. Zunz, in his biography of Rashi, does not confine his research exclusively to his subject, Rabbi Solomon ben Isaac. He enlarges the compass of his theme, and occasionally discusses, *en passant*, persons and events which, strictly speaking, fall outside the scope of his inquiry, or which needed only a cursory mention. For example, in the list of books and scholars quoted by Rashi in his commentaries, Zunz notes R. Jehudai Gäon, author of the *Halachot Gedoloth*. He does not, however, merely give the name, which for the purpose of his essay would have amply sufficed, but enters on a long disquisition concerning this work, examines the authenticity of the tradition which attributes its authorship to R. Jehudai Gäon, and adduces the opinions of various authorities on this point. In truth, this inquiry is, after all, only of secondary importance, irrelevant to his subject, the life of Rashi.

A similar procedure is adopted by him in the case of the hymnologist, R. Elazar Haqalir, mentioned in Rashi's Commentaries. Zunz discusses the poet at some length, and takes pains to refute the view that Rabbi Elazar Haqalir belonged to the later Tanaites—all of which was superfluous. A similar excursus is devoted to Rabenu Gershon, the light of the Diaspora. Rappoport, in his biographies, follows the same plan, but carries it to an inordinate

length, to the exhaustion and perplexity of his readers. Zunz, when he wrote his essay on Rashi, had, in my opinion, no intention of making it a complete summary of every detail, large and small, which would be indispensable for a comprehensive and perfect work. He only brought together material for a glorious palace, drew a beautiful and correct plan, and gave clear instructions how to build it in accordance with scientific rules. To others was left the task of rearing the edifice. Is not this indeed the architect's business—to make designs which the builders have to execute? Certain classes of work the cleverest designer is incompetent to carry out personally. Zunz honestly recognised that, for a perfect biography of Rashi, what was pre-eminently necessary was a full and careful examination of the wonderful results which that great teacher achieved for a knowledge of the Talmud in his Commentaries, Decisions and Responsa. Yet on all these subjects, Zunz has very little to say. Why? Because he knew full well that he was unequal to the task of the preliminary examination of the material. Like a genuine and conscientious scholar, therefore, he refrained from trespassing beyond the limit of his knowledge. While acknowledging the many excellencies of his work, I have found that, despite painstaking care and industry, errors crept into his essay, and many essential points were omitted.¹

It also appears that Zunz thought that R. Joseph Bonfils, whom Rashi mentions, is identical with the Rabbi of that name, who taught R. Tam. But this cannot be the case, since R. Joseph, mentioned by Rashi, died in Rashi's lifetime, while R. Tam was still a young child when his grandfather, Rashi, died. When he mentioned R. Eliezer Gaon bar Isaac, he thought that the latter was Rabbi

¹ In speaking of Rabbi Gershon, the light of the Diaspora, he gives many unnecessary details, and forgets to mention the extremely important fact that R. Gershon, with his own hand, prepared a correct manuscript copy of the Gemara, which was in Rashi's possession (*Succah*, 40a). This is stated in *Tosaphoth* in various places. R. Tam quoted from this manuscript. (See my *Biography of Rashi*, Note 4.)

Eliezer Hagadol. But, according to *Tosaphoth*, R. Eliezer Hagadol was Rashi's teacher. Zunz, indeed, excludes this teacher from the list of authorities quoted by the great Exegete, it having escaped his notice that the latter mentions R. Eliezer Ha-gadol in the *Pardes*, where he styles him the teacher of R. Jacob the elder, as well as of his other teachers; Rashi also quotes his opinion anonymously in *Aboda Zara*, 74a, with the phrase, למרין ריש למשנתי. The reference is clearly to R. Eliezer Hagadol (see *Pardes*, 238, *et aliis locis*; see also S. Bloch's *Biographical Notes on Rashi*, and my *Biography*). But what matter a few isolated errors? They do not affect the permanent and solid value of the essay. The author himself candidly admitted their existence, and, in fact, personally called attention to them. Ten years after the essay was issued, he printed in the Introduction to the *Gottesdienstliche Vorträge*, a list of his mistakes, some of which he corrected. We ought therefore not to regard the mistakes, but rather dwell upon the immense importance of this work, which paved the way to the science of Jewish biography, and which is so admirably calculated to serve as a model in this department of literary activity. These two essays which I have named, were the earliest seeds which he sowed in the field of Jewish science. The first was published in 1818, the second, four years later, in 1822, while the author was still a youth. Both quickly bore fruit in their influence on scholars and their work. Then many years passed, during which only fugitive articles came from his pen at rare intervals. It was, however, universally known that Zunz was studying, writing, and exploring, with incomparable zeal, the literary treasures buried in libraries, poring over neglected and forgotten manuscripts, and utilising them to the fullest degree in the researches in which he was engaged. In every place where he was known by name, and where his talents and abilities were fully recognised and appreciated, the results of his labours were ardently longed for.

At length, in the year 1832, expectation was more than satisfied by the publication of his great work, *Die gottesdienstliche Vorträge der Juden, Historisch entwickelt*. It would be wearisome to attempt here a description of this volume, with its multitude of new ideas in the history of Midrashic literature, or to pile up eulogies on its manifold excellencies. For who is not aware of the revolution it effected among Jewish students? Who does not know how it breathed a new spirit into the minds and hearts of unsophisticated readers of the Midrashim, and stimulated many of the students of the Torah to enter into similar investigations? But, strange to relate, notwithstanding the importance of the work, notwithstanding the extreme value of the jewels which it revealed in Midrashic literature, hitherto left unilluminated by the light of criticism; notwithstanding the honour paid both to the book and the author by all honest scholars, it did not at first yield any material profits. The price of the work, which ran to 500 pages, was moderate, and, as the edition did not go off easily, it had, after a few years, to be still further reduced. It is fifty-five years since I purchased a copy for a Reichsthaler. Zunz, as I have heard, did not derive any profit from his labours. This is the common fate of all authors who deal with Jewish literature. Many there be who eagerly seek their books like silver, but they bring no silver wherewith to purchase the books. Zunz accomplished two objects. First, he laid the foundations for a history of Midrashic literature, a subject never hitherto touched. His work also afforded material help towards comprehension of the evolution of culture among the Jews at successive periods, and may claim to have established the principles upon which Jewish history should be based. When we consider the results accruing from his work, we cannot deny that for all the authors who followed him, who occupied or still occupy themselves with these important departments, Zunz's researches have proved indispensable guides. Whether the fact be admitted or denied, whether

we acknowledge our indebtedness or not, he was undoubtedly a pioneer for all of us.

The motive that urged him to write the *Gottesdienstliche Vorträge* may be gathered from remarks in the preface. "Many hundred years have passed since Israel's glory departed, since he forfeited his freedom and country. But one treasure was left him—the Synagogue. This now became a home for the Jewish nationality. All who were devoted to their faith, found in it a refuge, where they received religious instruction and counsel; renewed their strength to endure terrible vicissitudes; obtained comfort in their sorrows; revived the hope they cherished that their freedom would again dawn. The service of the Synagogue was a rallying point to the Jewish people, and proved the safeguard of Israel's faith." This conception was the motor to his *Gottesdienstliche Vorträge*. Homilies in conjunction with prayers, were the perennial fountains which helped to produce a rich harvest of moral blessings. It would be his work to investigate scientifically the historic development of Homilies in the Synagogue. Another purpose would be indirectly served, the foundation stone would be laid for the history of the Jewish people.

It is natural that those who enjoy the fruits of men's thoughts should desire to know the benefactors who have given to them of their best. And by this nearer acquaintance with the teachers, the disciples are helped not a little to understand the teaching. When, therefore, Zunz saw what a great impression his book had made on intelligent readers, he thought it his duty to treat next of the authors of our mediæval literature. With extraordinary zeal and energy, he set about this new and difficult undertaking, published his *Beiträge zur Geschichte und Literatur* in 1845. In these researches, he throws light on the writers of the *Tosaphoth* and other mediæval authors, who occupied themselves with the science of Judaism. In my humble opinion, this subject had never before received such excellent treatment. One of our foremost contemporary

scholars once said to me that Zunz relied greatly, for this work, on the קורא הדורות, where the names of the writers of *Tosaphoth* are collected and classified. I replied, "No, sir; Zunz is not a hasty and superficial investigator, who insufficiently examines the sources he uses." I have also read his writings on the *Tosaphoth*, and fully recognise the value of his researches on this theme. They afford ample evidence of patient toil and critical insight, and have nothing in common with the bare outlines of the קהר. In one place I find he follows that work, and erroneously.¹

It must be admitted that, as in his *Gottesdienstliche Vorträge*, so in his second work, he succeeded in showing that the Jews were not destitute of culture; that their literature is indeed a storehouse of knowledge and wisdom, an object materially served by his other writings. I specially name: *Die Synagogale Poesie*, on the Piyutim and Selichot, issued in 1855, and *Die Literaturgeschichte der Synagogalen Poesie*, connected with the former, but which did not see the light till 1865, after the *Ritus*, which consists of inquiries into Synagogal rites, had appeared in 1859. In my reminiscences (MS.) I have stated that when I descant upon those contemporaries to whom I owe a debt for enlightening me and rousing in me the spirit of literary emulation, my object is not to discuss or criticise the details of their inquiries, but rather to point out the aims for which they strove with more or less success. Accordingly, in this article on Zunz and his writings, I propose to survey the objects which he hoped to achieve by his literary efforts; to show to the world that Jews, even in the Middle Ages, had a science and literature, certainly not inferior to, and

¹ In my *History of Jewish Tradition*, p. 349, note 30, I have already shown that Zunz (*Zur Literatur u. Geschichte*, p. 48), follows the קהר, who mentions *R. Chayim ben Joseph* as a Tosaphist. Zunz adds the conjecture that *R. Chaim*, *R. Tam's* pupil, was the son of *Joseph*: the קהר, however, is in error; there is no Tosaphist of that name. The source of the mistake is *Tosaphoth Menachot 88a*, from which he quotes *R. Chaim ben Joseph*; *R. Chia bar Joseph*, our *Amora*, mentioned *ibidem 90a*, is however meant. In the later editions of the Talmud this is corrected.

perhaps even surpassing, those of their neighbours; to demonstrate the truth that at no period did the spirit of Jewish poetry cease to put forth buds and blossoms, and to produce fruit among the sorrow-laden Hebrew race, and to prove that Jewish poetry has an enhanced value, because it immortalises the annals of Jewish history. Many have wondered why Zunz consecrated a large portion of his life to inquiries concerning Piyutim, which Ibn Ezra already stigmatised, remarking, for instance, that Qalir, in his Piyutim, had abused the Hebrew language, like an enemy who breaks down the walls of a city. One of our modern critics, Lagarde, contemns Zunz for his interest in the Piyutim, and denies him any taste in Hebrew style. The first ground of objection may be dismissed as of a superficial character. The merit of Qalir's poetry does not consist in its form—the flowers of fancy, which flourish and wither, according to the variation of tastes; but in the contents, “in the wealth of ideas, which arouse and stimulate Israel's love to his God, and in the occasional beautiful pictures which dazzle the mind and captivate the heart.” Ibn Ezra, the Spaniard, only found fault with the style. The same criticism applies to the Poetanim, who followed in Qalir's footsteps. Discussing them from this point of view, and in this spirit, Zunz accomplished a useful and valuable work, for which he had the requisite aptitude. His keen insight enabled him to perceive the depth of feeling from which the Piyutim welled forth. How beautifully has this been expressed by one of our most eminent scholars, Dr. David Kaufman, in his reply to Paul Lagarde (p. 20): “Leopold Zunz,” he says, “the great artist who took a comprehensive view of every subject which he investigated, recognised, with the keen, critical sagacity natural to him, that, in order adequately to discuss the Piyutim, it is absolutely requisite to conceive and describe the hell of persecution, out of which the poetical Jewish literature in the Middle Ages sprang up. It is essential that we should go the poets' land, and see the places where

these pearls of thought were formed. Zunz, unsurpassed by predecessors or contemporaries, apprehended and comprehended the storm of sighs and groans in this literature which smite on the hearts of all who have the capacity to feel. He, as no one else, sympathised with the torrents of tears that produced the poetry of the Synagogue. He was seized by a great longing to open *our* eyes to the terrible calamities Israel sustained, so that we, too, might understand the overwhelming multitude of sighs, see the spring from which flowed the streams of tears. He wished to pass in review before us the heartrending events which occasioned the sighs and the groans. With wonderful art, without unnecessary ornaments of style, without rhetorical flourishes, simply by drawing our attention to the results which his calm, patient, and dispassionate studies produced, Zunz accomplished his work. And, therefore, he deserves to be called the historian of his people; for he narrated, truthfully and vividly, its annals in the dark and troublous mediæval days. He has shown how sorrows are wedded with supplications, like lightning and thunder, like anguish and tears." All who complainingly wonder at Zunz's devotion to the Piyut should ponder these words, and they will appreciate the magnificent work which he accomplished by his investigations into that branch of literature. They will recognise that what they have rejected is the corner-stone of Jewish history. Lagarde's strictures are not worth answering, especially after Kaufman, in his *brochure* (p. 28), has proved "that this Anti-Semite critic has less knowledge than the merest school-boy of the subject he presumes to treat, that he is even incapable of translating, much less understanding, the Hebrew poetry of the Middle Ages."

II.

From the day the *Gottesdienstliche Vorträge* came into my hands, I was drawn towards its author, and felt for him a disciple's respect for his master. I studied his

work as assiduously and carefully as I was wont to do the Talmud and Posekim. I turned over his ideas in my mind, examined his arguments, tested his positions as far as the resources of my library allowed. Although I occasionally found statements of which I could not altogether approve, I could not say that he ever consciously misled. His quotations are always given faithfully. His criticisms are genuine and just. He is not guilty of perversions, in order to force the opinions of scholars into agreement with his views or subordination to his purpose. His inquiries were always conducted in the right way. He never seeks to dazzle his readers by empty rhetorical effects. If he knew that he could convey his meaning in a sentence of three words, he would not have added a fourth for the sake of embellishment. He deemed it despicable to conceal his true opinions in ambiguous phrases. Throughout the *Gottesdienstliche Vorträge*, I have not found any remark of a contentious character, or one that would betray chagrin, jealousy, or contempt for fellow-students. He does not try to force his opinions upon others by invective or artifice. Zunz's wish was to build up the house of Israel and heal its breaches, not to pull down its walls or lay bare its foundations. He never girds at any healthy Jewish customs; but he was not blind to the fact that some of them had been covered with an accumulation of dust. The whole of his life he consecrated to our literature, which, alas, is contemned by those who are ignorant of it within and outside the Jewish community. To proclaim its merits and convince both classes of its excellence was his heartfelt longing, which, indeed, he lived to see, in a great measure, realised. Many of those who had formerly despised Jewish literature became its firm admirers. Who can deny that the living interest which our Talmudic and Midrashic literature has aroused among non-Jewish scholars, is due in a considerable degree to the influence of Zunz's writings—as, indeed, has been

abundantly acknowledged. But the fame achieved by him among his own people reached a height which very few have attained. When Zunz died, I paid a tribute to his memory (*Beth Talmud*, Pt. V., p. 71), from which the following passage may be quoted: "Zunz was a wondrous phenomenon in our generation. Everyone knows that he could not be counted among the orthodox Jews. Nor, indeed, did he have the least desire to be so counted. And yet the members of this section of Jewry speak of him with the utmost respect and reverence. For this apparently strange anomaly we can only account by a clear recognition of the fact that the Jews are truly and sincerely grateful to all their benefactors. And Zunz who was a sterling benefactor to the whole of his people, was popular with them all. Jews, both orthodox and reform, draw the water of knowledge from his well. Not a single genuine investigator, whether belonging to one or the other party, will move a step in the study of our literary antiquities without Zunz's writings at his side. How, then, should the debt of obligation to him be denied or his memory fail to be preserved." I do not think that any honest critic will fail to agree with these sentiments. If isolated individuals among us have spoken against him, we can only deplore the fact. On more than one occasion Grätz criticised him in a manner equally unworthy of the critic and the subject. Whenever I noticed it I always felt grieved at seeing one of those whose utterances were unvaryingly received with respect and carried weight, publicly disparaging our great men. Do not ignorant critics pour contumely enough on Israel's scholars? Was there any need for one of our own masters needlessly to bicker with a fellow-scholar? What could have tempted Grätz to sin so grievously against Zunz? He surely knew full well that the educated and cultured classes would not honour him any the more on this account. I am convinced that though he affected to think lightly of Zunz, he acknowledged, in his inmost heart, the

nobility of Zunz's character and the exceeding value of his labours in helping to create and foster a just appreciation of Israel's literature. Who, indeed, so competent as Grätz to appraise the extreme importance of his great contemporary's work for the science of history? Who availed himself to a greater degree of that work than Grätz, whether he names his authority or passes it over in silence? Some of Grätz's defenders affirm that, when he was about to publish the first part of his history (Vol. III.), Zunz exclaimed jokingly: "What, another history of the Jews!"—a sneer which the historian never forgave. I certainly do not blame him for feeling resentment and expressing indignation, and can enter into his sentiments. He had devoted his physical strength, his intellectual energies, and his time to the preparation of a history of the Jews which he deemed was of paramount necessity because Jost's attempt had not, in his view, risen to the height of the theme. And now who is the one to throw cold water on his undertaking? Zunz, whose criticisms in all matters appertaining to history, are by all Jewish scholars esteemed so valuable! Not only does the great critic withhold approval from his work; he actually discourages it! Can we be surprised that Grätz was keenly sensitive to this, as it seemed to him, insulting attitude, and could never forget or forgive it? But what I fail to understand is, why Grätz should have seen fit to disparage and endeavour to drag into the dust his critic's knowledge and judgment, because the latter would not take him at his own valuation. In the pursuit of knowledge, the personal factor should be eliminated. The importation of individual resentment must inevitably lead to a perversion of truth and justice. If a nobleman has put a slight upon me, shall I avenge the affront on his child? In my opinion, this was not merely a crime but a blunder. Grätz was powerless to injure Zunz. He only hurt himself. A class of scholars of another stamp also proved themselves ungrateful. The orthodox rabbis who, at the same time,

were men of culture, assiduously pored over Zunz's *Gottendienstliche Vorträge*, wrote and published articles which were based on it, and in which the best part of their material were drawn from it. And yet in their piety (!) they never so much as mentioned Zunz's name. I marvel how a man who so far approves of another's work as to appropriate it wholesale, should not only deny his obligations to his authority, but should even presume to set up as his critic. But this conduct, though hard to justify, is easy to understand.

A Rabbi of the class to which I have referred, occupies a most unenviable position, if fate has cast his lines among a community of zealots, where his flock, upon whom he is dependent, are his masters. Such a Rabbi, we can all understand, would have to be very cautious about mentioning Zunz; the firebrands in his congregation would at once accuse him of being hand and glove with the reformers. He is not afraid, to nearly the same extent, of the reproachful interrogatory which the cultured man would put to him: "How is it that you conceal the name of the original discoverer and owner, from whose well you draw such copious draughts of wisdom?" I am acquainted with a certain student and author who, though he has appropriated a wealth of material from Zunz's writings, frequently without dropping a hint of its origin, has, nevertheless, made it his business to criticise Zunz on every possible opportunity. I have heard this scholar urge, in all simplicity, that the course he had adopted was a supreme need at the present day. The reverence paid to Zunz, he said, has grown into an idolatry to be stamped out, or at least, weakened. I could only laugh inwardly and think to myself, How happy this man must feel in his conceit! I recollected, at the same time, that in my long life, I have frequently seen dwarfs boastfully passing judgment on intellectual giants, whose height they were incapable of measuring. All his antagonists have not succeeded in diminishing by one hair's breadth Zunz's well-earned

fame, nor did their attempts trouble him in the least. He pursued the even tenour of his way, though they "sought many crooked devices." He was a man of peace, even towards those who openly waged war against him. His path was not in the storm; he hated the strifes of scholars, never defended himself against attack, neither treated his antagonists with contempt, nor overwhelmed them with invective or vituperation. He only had to exhibit his noble spirit and they were stricken dumb.

The report that, when the first volume of Grätz's history appeared, Zunz departed from his usual rule and spoke satirically, may lower him in our eyes. That he should have gone out of his way to disparage a work on the history of the Jews—a department, the investigation of which occupied the whole of his life—may well occasion surprise. But we shall not wonder if we consider the method which Zunz pursued for the attainment of his objects, and examine in detail his productions in this branch of science. After such a survey we shall be in a position to understand why a new historical work, at this period, was not to his liking. Zunz thought that the time had not yet arrived for rearing an historical structure worthy of Israel. His ideal was a complete and stately edifice, in which nothing should be lacking. This could not be raised till all the stones, large and small, had been brought together, and all the materials requisite for a perfect building, such as he designed, were on the site. Only thus could one hope to found a glorious palace. Zunz, therefore, concentrated his attention on the details and materials of history, and aimed at gathering together one by one, the facts which would form the stones of the historic structure. But it does not lie within the power of a single individual, or even a complete generation, to accomplish the entire task. The sentence of the Mishna served him, however, as an encouraging motto: "It is not thy duty to complete the work; do not therefore deem thyself free to neglect it." Let it not be thought that I

have attributed thoughts to Zunz which he never conceived, and that the above statements are of a purely supposititious character, and have emanated from my imagination. This is not the case. All the foregoing has been gathered from Zunz's own pithy remarks. In his biography of that most eminent Jewish critic, Azariah De Rossi, Zunz explicitly says (*Kerem Chemed*, Pt. V., p. 130): "that an intelligent man will seek knowledge in details, before he will venture to discourse on great subjects." Does not this sentence sum up the arguments of the last few pages? I find in these few words, a clear indication of his views on the writing of Jewish history. The essay on De Rossi's life from which I have quoted a tersely expressed, but widely comprehensive thought, is one of the most brilliant jewels in Zunz's diadem. The biographical sketch is a perfect mine of novel information for the history of the Jews in Italy during an entire generation (see Grätz, Pt. V.) No reader can help admiring its completeness. Not a single detail that has any bearing on De Rossi's life has been left untouched. How beautiful is the author's description of De Rossi's intrepidity, which scorned the snares of the rebels against the light. "Justice was his aim, his soul longed for truth, and in the might of his spirit, he could not refrain from plunging into the ocean of investigation. The waves of reason rolled about him and he heeded not the fluttering of the bats." Who will deny that in these vivid metaphors, Zunz gave us an idea, an inkling of the way in which he sought knowledge, and of the method which he followed in dealing with the bats. For neither were his ears sensitive to their fluttering which was drowned in the roar of the rushing waters of enquiry. This essay affords clear evidence of his complete mastery over Hebrew style, and of his desire to write the results of his studies in this tongue. Some German scholars scorn to compose essays on Jewish science in the holy language, and scoff at those who adopt this practice.¹ Zunz did not belong

¹ [Weiss himself invariably writes in Hebrew, and the present essay was written in that language.—ED.]

to their ranks. I am certain that he desired to have his *Gottesdienstliche Vorträge* translated into Hebrew, if he could only have found a competent translator who could be relied upon to interpret its exact meaning according to his conception.¹

His fame as a master of Hebrew style travelled far and wide. Hence Krochmal, in his last testament, charged his sons to entrust his writings to Zunz for publication, confident that in the hands of so perfect a Hebrew scholar the undertaking would be brought to a successful issue. And indeed, how conscientiously Zunz discharged the task allotted to him is abundantly evident from his preface, in which he discusses, with admirable conciseness and in a few lines, the successors and heirs to the prophets, *i.e.* the chosen scholars of every age up to the time of Krochmal, to whose profound erudition in the Thora and Jewish history, he does full justice. He depicts the confusion in which he found the literary remains, out of which he was asked to construct a perfect literary work. When we consider the book in its present shape and form, we are compelled to admire the marvellous skill with which Zunz created it out of chaos. With equal brevity and lucidity, he surveys the contents of the chapters, not like a mere compiler of excerpts or abstracts, but like the true critical student he indeed was. As an appendix to the preface, he wrote a long note on the three grand ethical principles suggested by the essay *אמונה צרופה* which the author had begun. The intelligent and attentive reader will acknowledge that they constitute the entire basis of ethical science, as conceived by the students of Judaism, and, in a generalised form they express all the good qualities which the seeker after truth may be recommended to

¹ C. D. Lippe, of Vienna, thought, many years ago, of publishing a translation of this work. Zunz replied to the request for permission, that he was aware how much correction the book needed, which he could not personally execute on account of his advanced age. He would, however, be pleased, if I and my colleagues were to undertake the responsibility of superintending the publication of a correct translation.

cultivate. A careful study of this section has convinced me that it was written from the depths of the heart, for all the qualities indicated were combined in the author himself.

“Who is wise? He who learns from all men.” This sentence might have been spoken of Zunz, who did not disdain instruction—and indeed was grateful for it—whatever the quarter from which it came. It is indeed refreshing to observe the absolute honesty with which he records his thanks to S. L. Rappoport, in the preface to his *Gottesdienstliche Vorträge*, and acknowledges how much influenced he was by this scholar in his researches into Jewish homiletics. Rappoport was not the only one thus favoured. He behaved towards every one in the same way; from the obscurest author of a wise thought he learnt eagerly, intelligently and appreciatively. The truth was always welcome to him, whatever was its source or authority, and whatever was the language or place in which it was promulgated. Absolutely indifferent was it to him, whether the author was a Talmudical casuist, Chasid, Cabbalist, Doctor, or sceptical philosopher; whether he wrote or spoke in any modern vernacular, or conveyed his thoughts in the ancient language of the Hebrews. The habits and customs of the country in which a writer was born and received his early training, never affected his estimate of his work. How many German scholars have I seen whose judgment of a man and his knowledge varies according to his society manners, religious beliefs and practice! Woe to any one who appears before such critics in a long coat and with curly *Peoth* over his temples. Even if the visitor should be a past master in Pilpul and wise as Daniel, he is forthwith condemned as a fool. The long coat, the *Peoth* and the Pilpul are irresistible evidence of the justice of the sentence. But double and treble woe to one who presumes to believe in the genuineness of the Cabbala, and *à fortiori* to one who studies that occult science. All the virtues cannot

extenuate the heinous offence of faith in the Cabbala! This was Grätz's attitude towards all who devoted themselves to Cabbala, and believed in its sanctity, and endeavoured to assist materially, or even merely showed a friendly interest in the students of the mysterious science. He pronounced "Anathema Maranatha" on their merits, qualities, efforts and achievements. See for instance, his remarks on Rabbi Joseph Caro, the Geonim, the author of the *אורח חיים* and Rabbi David Oppenheim. Zunz did not act after this barbarous fashion. He aspired to imitate the noble attribute of God, who looks to the heart and not to the outward appearance; judges the man and not his clothes. If among a thousand inanities, Zunz found a single worthy thought, he detached it from its mean surroundings and gave it a noble setting in his own writings. It never entered his mind to hold up its original author to scorn because the pearl which he had created was encrusted with sand and earth.

Among his many noble qualities, the following seems to me the noblest. He never condemned any one for his religious opinions. I do not find in his works ridicule of the sayings of our ancient sages. He carefully weighed all their utterances, though they did not altogether accord with his own modern ideas. Their value did not, he thought, depend upon their approximations to our latter-day conceptions. Those views, even, which may to us appear erroneous, have a basis in the sentiments of the age that produced them. And to this he refers, in his introduction to Krochmal's work, when he says: "Without a knowledge of general history, we lack the clue to the history of our race. The customs and institutions of our ancestors that have any reasonable foundation, as well as their disputations and exegeses, originate in contemporary events." This proposition implies the following converse: Since our fathers' customs, institutions, controversies and expositions are the creatures of the ages in which they were born, the records of these peculiar institutions,

exegeses and disputations are reliable evidences of the sentiments and thoughts in the early periods when they first saw light. Hence, in order to discern the *Zeit-geist* of any period, it does not matter, in the slightest degree, whether its established customs, argumentations and expositions approve themselves, or are repugnant to our taste. In either case, they reflect the character of their age. This will help us to understand why Zunz shows no special preference for the expressions of ideas that would harmonise with his views over those that are antagonistic to his convictions. Both were subjects for calm and dispassionate inquiry. That which intrinsically is of secondary value, or even quite worthless, is useful inasmuch as it affords us knowledge of historical events and allows us an insight into mental dispositions and degrees of enlightenment and culture at different epochs. For the final purpose of his enquiry—the study of Jewish national history—all these elements formed valuable material.

Marvellous was the extent of his erudition in earlier and later Hebrew literature, and in all departments of criticism. Not unseldom does he quote from writings which seem, at first sight, hardly worth wasting time over. But, as already said, Zunz read everything, secondary and inferior, as well as the best literature. His strength lay in this, that, with his keen critical insight, he found every book that he read helpful to his purpose. Among a hundred inanities he always succeeded in discovering one valuable thought at least. Zunz practised devoutly the injunctions of the Talmudic sages: "Nothing uttered by a scholar should be scornfully rejected." And this indeed is the mark of a real student. Once I had in my hand a booklet called *פרק האהל*, consisting of short homilies on the Pentateuchal sections. I read it through from beginning to end, and could not help laughing at its fantastic homiletics and silly exegesis. But after I had finished it I found a few more pages appended. I turned over a leaf and was astounded to find that this volume which

had aroused in me nothing but contempt for its, as I thought, idiotic author, contained some excellent thoughts. The appendix was a valuable essay on the principles of Talmudic Methodology. This taught me a needed lesson which may be thus expressed: Do not despise a book because of foolish remarks it may contain. Search it for wise thoughts; and, if you only find one sentence that approves itself to your judgment, value the book for the sake of that sentence. Zunz deserves praise, because he paid heed to our inferior, as well as our worthier, literature. Not despising small things, he accomplished great; became a teacher of many minds and set an example to be admired and followed by all upright hearts. The reader must not imagine that I ever believed Zunz's knowledge of our ancient literature could be put on a level with the profound and extensive erudition of the great Talmudical scholars, who had at their fingers' ends every topic referred to in the Talmuds and other legalistic Jewish literature, were often able to repeat, word for word, the greater portion of it by heart, and knew in the same thorough fashion all the decisions of our illustrious jurists from Alfasi and Maimonides down to their own time, and were acquainted with every Midrash at its original source. Certainly Zunz was not an erudite scholar of that pattern. Heaven forbid that my love and reverence for the man should tempt me to transgress the line of truth in his praise. It would have been impossible for one who passed the greater portion of his childhood in the Gymnasium, and of his youth and early manhood in the University, to attain this degree of proficiency; the requisite leisure was, in his case, lacking. But Zunz, I fancy, had a unique method of gaining his wide scholarship. At the outset of his career he conceived the mighty project of diligently collecting the materials and noting all the sources indispensable for a knowledge of the historic evolution of the science of Judaism, and for a comprehension of the various periods and their progressive movements, and of the spirit

that breathes in their literary products. These authorities that Zunz gathered together would, he thought, ultimately form the firm bed-rocks on which a history might be reared. To attain this purpose he laboured unremittingly and unweariedly, and extracted from buried and long-forgotten works the material necessary for his plan. In this way he successfully mastered our extensive literature. With wonderful discrimination he gathered the roses from among the thorns in the garden of Jewish literature, separated the kernel from the shell, and acquired an almost unequalled acquaintance with books. We would, however, blunder egregiously if we hastily jumped to the conclusion that Zunz condemned the thorns to destruction, or cast away the shell as absolutely worthless. Much that others regarded as thorns was not so regarded by him. The argumentative methods of the Talmud, in some cases apparently perverse or casuistic; the strange Hagadas and astounding Midrashim; the Cabbala, which, to the sound intellect, wears a forbidding aspect;—all these elements of Jewish literature, which are foreign to our present conceptions and modes of thought, were in his eyes not thorns to be thrown on the fire, but fair plants, straight and upright at first, that had, however, in course of time, grown warped and twisted. They are not, on that account, absolutely worthless. By their help we can trace the progress and development of culture among the Jews. And since this forms one of the most important departments of Jewish history, it goes without saying that the prickly thorns and gnarled stems were necessary as providing a sure basis for investigation.

I have already stated that all Zunz's writings afford evidence that one of the chief purposes, which he always kept in view, was to show to the world that Israel is not devoid of culture, and that his literature is a store-house of knowledge. In this he followed the great light of Judaism, who wrote in his letter to the scholars of Lunel (Maimonides *Responsa*, No. 49) that his heartfelt desire was: "To

show the peoples and the princes the beauty of the Thora, for indeed she is fair to look upon." In all Zunz's great works this was his goal. He felt urged to proclaim that Israel had a literature rivalling the ancient and contemporary literatures, that this woe-stricken people had a history, philosophy, and poetry second to none.

To the question, What positive benefit will accrue should public opinion admit our claims to these excellencies, Zunz replied, at the beginning of his *Zur Literatur u. Geschichte* : " If men recognise that Israel has a history, a science, and a poetic literature, like other nations, they will honour Jewish science and literature. They will accord the Jews the right of mental and spiritual equality. This recognition of Israel's intellectual and moral elevation will lead to an outpouring of the spirit of humanity on the peoples. Mutual understanding will be followed by a bond of brotherhood ; the admission of the claims of Israel's science and literature would have as its inevitable corollary a concession of equality of rights to Jews in practical life." These sentences throw a flood of light on Zunz's aims and ideals, the goal he set himself, and the path by which he hoped to reach it. Zunz fought for equality of intellectual, social, and political rights, not with violent acts or with words that pierce like swords. He proceeded gently and steadily. His weapons were logical and scientific arguments that compel assent. In the war of words he was careful not to reply to invective with invective. He sought to justify Israel, to bring to light his uprightness, to announce among the nations the purity of his ideas and the sublimity of his sentiments to be found expressly or implicitly in his unjustly maligned literature. But he did not propose to enter into controversies with the reviling opponents of Judaism concerning their beliefs, or to pour ridicule on them and their views. Experience taught him, as it is daily teaching us, that those who resort to hard measures miss their aim. He never missed it, because he observed the counsel of the text,

"Keep uprightness; look straight: there is a future for the man of peace." A seeker of justice, he pursued humility; but he never humbled himself to the proud, nor used the beggar's cringing tone, for he did not crave a boon, but asked justice. It ought, therefore, not to be imagined that Zunz, advocating the claims of his people, always eulogised its ethics and literature in a spirit of partiality, while he shut his eyes to its faults and deliberately concealed and denied its shortcomings. It was not so. Zunz was essentially a man of truth, and neither love nor hatred could tempt him to overstep the bounds of strictest accuracy.

III.

I deem it unnecessary to apologise for refraining from a discussion of every minute incident of Zunz's life; for I do not intend to speak of his birthplace, early training, teachers, and sympathetic fellow-students by whom he was influenced—his association with them, his separation from them, and choice of a unique path—the study of Israel's wisdom and the advancement of his people's welfare—to which noble and worthy objects he consecrated his life. I will also omit any detailed account of the vicissitudes which befell him in the various portions of his life, and the difficulties that he experienced in finding a position adapted to his abilities; how the fates mocked him and changed his fortune a dozen times. At one period he was a teacher of children; then he adopted the calling of preacher, and afterwards he became the editor of a newspaper. In none of these callings was he successful. At certain times he suffered destitution, and seriously thought of seeking a situation as clerk or accountant with a Berlin firm. His extreme poverty and despair actually drove him at one time to seek a post as *מורה תורה*, and he applied to Choriner, of Brody, for a Rabbinic diploma, which he obtained from that Rabbi. Surely Zunz was conscious of his comparative ignorance of Jewish

legal *praxis*; and yet, for the sake of a livelihood and salary, he so far forgot himself as to be willing to accept an office unsuitable to him and for which he was unsuited. I will not dwell upon the misfortunes which he suffered till he received the appointment of preacher to the Old Synagogue at Prague. It was not very long before he voluntarily resigned this office and returned to Berlin. These biographical details need not detain us long. In Adam's book it was evidently written: "Zunz shall win renown as a scholar, but shall not be styled Rabbi." My purpose is not to narrate the incidents of Zunz's domestic, communal, and social life, and the troubles which fate and opposition brought upon him. I only desire to place on record here a necessary and impartial criticism of his literary attainments and achievements; to offer him a merited tribute of eulogy for the noble virtues which he taught by precept and example; and to acknowledge the debt I personally owe him for the influence his life exercised upon me and the instruction I derived from his books.¹

Yet I cannot help touching here briefly on an incident that affected his posthumous fame. After Zunz, towards the close of a long and active life, had become the glory of Berlin Jews, he was, as is commonly known, honourably maintained by the heads of that community—not by way of charity, which Zunz would never have accepted, but in return for some light duties. The income from this source, added to the profits of his later publications, supplied his modest wants, and left something over. This residue he bequeathed to a relative who had faithfully tended his old age till the last moment. On this fact becoming known, slanderers spread an exaggerated report of the wealth he had left behind him. "Look," they said, "Zunz all his lifetime feigned poverty, and has accumulated a fortune."

¹ Recently an essay on Zunz, by Dr. Maybaum, of Berlin, has reached me, containing some interesting details gathered from Zunz's letters and from the diary he kept. Credit is due to Dr. Maybaum for having put together valuable materials for a complete life of Zunz. I have had but little occasion to use them in this article.

Who raised the outcry? Not the scholars who "eat bread and salt and drink water by measure, and weary themselves in the study of the Thora"; but those who live daintily at the expense of others, and traffic with their learning. May Heaven forgive them!

As regards his attitude towards Biblical criticism, he had but little occasion to give full expression to his views. A complete chapter (Ch. II.) of his *Gottesdienstliche Vorträge* is devoted to a critical discussion of the exact date of certain of the Scriptures; and he there demonstrates that, taking their contents and substance as a fair test, some of the Biblical writings could not have been composed at the dates commonly assigned them. I have not met a criticism of the Pentateuch in any of his formal works. But Zunz was not a man to hide the convictions at which he had arrived after ripe study and mature reflection. He, therefore, in his old age, arranged his ideas on this important subject, and published a long essay on Biblical criticism, which, however, is completely taken up with a disquisition on the Five Books of Moses. He calls attention to the objections that have been advanced against the Unity of the Pentateuch, and offers conjectures as to those portions of it which should be ascribed to a later period than that of the Lawgiver. His inquiries, which dissect the Thora with the critical knife, are obviously antagonistic to the accepted traditions of Jews. What moved Zunz to publish his opinions on a matter where they would, as he could clearly foresee, be regarded as thorns in the eyes of the bulk of Jewry? Nothing but the irresistible impulse that urges the investigator faithfully to declare his ripe and carefully-matured thoughts. The true critic cannot suppress the ideas, which, in his heart, he believes to be correct. This sufficiently explains why Zunz proclaimed with tongue and pen, and, in fact, published to the whole world, the views which he cherished as truth.¹

¹ A large portion of that essay appeared in the periodical *Z. D. M. G.*, Pt. XXVII., p. 669; the rest in his collected writings, Pt. I.

But we must remember that his critical studies, which repudiate Moses' authorship for considerable portions of the books named after him, and ascribe them to later periods, were only treated by him as hypotheses with a purely scientific value, but with no legitimate right to affect the actual living practice of Judaism. And, according to Zunz, the main thing is not study, but practice. Zunz never, as far as we have heard, looked upon his books as a guide to conduct; never presumed to lay down the law; never took it upon himself to say: These precepts are beautiful, observe them; those are ugly and obsolete, abrogate them.

The principle that governed his thoughts and beliefs may be thus formulated: The institutions of Judaism, as developed in the course of ages, adopted and confirmed by the custom of the Jewish people, consecrated by antiquity, are sacred and inviolable. To lay hands on them is to attack the very citadel of Judaism. So he expressly declares in a reply which he addressed to the Abbé Chiarini, who presumed to teach the Jews the path they should walk in religion (Zunz, *Gesammelte Schriften*, Pt. I., Sect. 12. Berlin: 1875). In that answer to our would-be mentor, who advises the Jews as to what is good for them, and enjoins them that if they wish to prosper they ought to give up their oral traditions, and return to the Law of Moses—as the Karaites had done—Zunz explicitly says: "The history of every nation exhibits either a rise or fall—progress or retrogression. No nation ever reverts to its ancient position, no people has ever allowed itself to be fettered by the dead letter. Holy Writ, as well as history, teaches that the Law of Moses was never fully and completely carried out in its literal sense. Liberty was given to the great leaders of every generation to make modifications and innovations through the properly constituted and generally recognised authorities. Priests and prophets, kings and Synhedria,¹ made frequent use of this right.

¹ According to tradition, the text, ככל התורה אשר יורוך ("according

Hence, a *return to Mosaism* would be illegal, pernicious, and, indeed, impossible. As our would-be adviser does not approve of the whole of the laws of Moses, but picks and chooses divers parts which strike him as harmonising with the general spirit of Scripture, and others which accord with the sentiment prevalent at the present moment (and who can tell what the fate of the latter will be), would not the acceptance of his counsel thicken the confusion, create fresh sects and schisms, and inflame religious bigotry? Seventeen centuries' experience has abundantly taught the Jews that the strivings for innovations of this character have always disturbed the communal peace, jeopardised their social harmony, prosperity, and happiness, and been invariably succeeded by bitter pangs of conscience." Zunz, therefore, impelled by these views, sums up his arguments at the end of his reply substantially as follows:—"We religionists will never accept the advice tendered us by this critic. Any reform in the fundamentals of our faith is so much labour lost, and is indeed positively injurious to our best interests." The just inference to be drawn from this sentiment is, that, though Zunz was a severe Biblical critic, yet his scientific criticism had no connection with the living practice of religion, in which he did not deviate by so much as a hair's breadth from the customs of his people. Zunz, far from desiring or approving, abhorred every reform of traditional Judaism. According to the views expressed in this essay, he certainly believed that nothing was better for Jews than faithful adherence to the accepted religious customs of the Jewish people, which have become, by long usage, a part of Israel's religion.

to the law which *they* shall teach thee") points to the laws of the elders. Of the discretion allowed the prophets, Elijah's procedure on Mount Carmel is an apt example. In regard to the priests, it is said, "Thou shalt come to the priest who shall be in those days." Of kings, as legislators, I know of none whom Zunz had in mind, except Hezekiah. The Synhedrion's main function was legislative.

The essay from which I have just quoted was written in Zunz's youthful period, when his heart was full of hopes and plans for the distant future. In those days, there were not a few holders of, or aspirants to, the Rabbinical office, who gave themselves up, heart and soul, to the Reform movement. Some of these preachers whom I knew, would have overturned the whole edifice of Judaism, had it depended on their will or wish. But Zunz, as we have seen, even in his young days, was not of their party. Nor when, advanced in years, and ripened in knowledge, he stood at the summit of his fame, did he alter his opinion. His views on the abrogation of Jewish customs or institutions, are set forth with sufficient explicitness in his controversy with Geiger in 1845, between whom and himself a difference had broken out, which had the effect of considerably cooling their friendship. Geiger found it intolerable that a scholar of Zunz's stamp should bear him ill-will. Not a week had formerly passed without an interchange of correspondence and now a long time had elapsed without a line from Zunz. Even his own letters to Zunz had been left unanswered. Geiger wrote again to his friend a long letter, complaining of the latter's inexplicable silence and estrangement. This is not the place for large quotations from a correspondence which has no direct bearing upon our present purpose. But one point is noteworthy. Geiger blames Zunz severely and uncompromisingly, for having, in one of his essays, upheld the custom of wearing phylacteries, as a noble and sacred institution (*Gesammelte Schriften*, Part II., p.172, *seqq.*). Geiger wonders at this advocacy. "Even admitting," he says, "that every popular custom may possibly have a deep meaning, what can be said in favour of this particular usage, which is based on a mistaken interpretation of the text (referring to רש"ב's exposition), and approaches dangerously close to the superstition of wearing amulets and charms. Does such an institution deserve to be called holy?" He criticises Zunz for his essay (*Ibid.* 191) on the sanctity of the Abrahamic rite, in which the author

exclaims, "God forbid that we should tamper with this precept, which was in past times, and is still at the present day, revered as sacred by the whole Jewish people. Who will dare to abrogate, with impunity, this holy rite?" Geiger dissented, "Though I agree that it was unwise on the part of the *Reform Verein* to touch the rite of circumcision, which the bulk of Jews still hold sacred, yet I cannot comprehend the necessity of working up a spirit of enthusiasm for the institution on the ground that it is generally esteemed." On a third occasion, he took Zunz to task because he heard that the latter observed the regulations of Judaism in his household arrangements more strictly than ever. "If Zunz's scrupulousness and punctiliousness," he says, "were a consequence of the office he holds [he was, at that time, principal of the Training College for Jewish Teachers in Berlin], it would be intelligible." But he heard it reported that Zunz's strictness was an outcome of his inward convictions; that he thought it every Jew's duty to maintain in their integrity the traditional customs universally accepted by the community. This, to him, was incomprehensible. To Geiger's ambiguous words, Zunz replied clearly and decisively, without qualification or reservation, in terms that express his fundamental views on Reform in Judaism, of which the following is the gist: "The norm as well as the sanction for Judaism is the practice actually in vogue. Its obligation rests on the consecration of general usage. The great thinkers, Maimonides, Ibn Ezra, Nachmanides, have the right and privilege of building on this foundation. It is our duty to change *our own* ways; our *religion* needs no change. Foreign excrescences, that have attached themselves to the pure creed, need to be removed, but the sacred inheritance of the congregation of Jacob should not be touched. The outcry against the Talmud can only come from one who has renounced Judaism." Thus far Zunz. This is not the place to speak about Geiger. My object is to sketch in his own words Zunz's character, methods and views on practical Judaism, and the traditions in vogue,

which alone, according to him, can form an actual standard for the religious life. We may wonder at the combination, in an honest man like Zunz, of two diametrically opposed elements.

How is scepticism as to the unity of the Pentateuch to be reconciled with a marked reverence for tradition shown in a stern refusal to budge an inch from what has been consecrated by the adoption of the people? How is a zeal for the honour of the Talmud, which he carries to the extreme length of renouncing all communication with its detractors, compatible with a doubt, not kept to himself, but deliberately disseminated, as to the authenticity of the first five books of the Bible? We shall have no occasion for surprise if we bear in mind the point already touched upon, that for Zunz, study and practice are distinct provinces. The investigator should be at liberty to explore; the soul, God's gift, is not in bonds. But any professor of a particular religion is bound to rule his life according to the code that obtains among his co-religionists; and this code is indeed differentially religion.

Among his many excellent qualities, one stands pre-eminent—the virtue of toleration. He was patient towards the views of others, both in religion and criticism. Only wickedness exasperated him. Would that all Jewish scholars emulated him in this respect. Frequent experience should have taught us sufficiently that intolerance breeds discord, and peace alone promotes well-being. Alas! to the sore grief of all right-minded people, intolerance is an old evil among the Jews. We find it manifested first and foremost by those who differ in their dogmatic belief. “Hard-shell” orthodox Israelites in one camp, arrayed against free-thinking sceptics. Neither party can bear the other. The air is filled with their vehement and constant contentions. And yet both sides are thoroughly honest. The one is honest in its universal faith, the other in its spirit of universal

inquiry. What need of quarrelling? Let each cling to his genuine beliefs. A man has no business to set himself up as a judge of his neighbour's thoughts. This office belongs to God alone, who searches the heart. Such contentions have deprived us of many advantages, and ruined our communal peace. Yet, in spite of these notorious considerations, partisans persist in disputations. Why? Because intolerance has filled them with a mad perverseness. The discussions of Jewish scholars and critics are warped by intolerance. Scholars obstinately stand on their individual opinions without a shred of reason, as if they had sworn fealty to the children of their brains. Everyone regards his argument, no matter whether good or bad, strong or weak, as absolutely irrefragable, and cannot brook opposition. Intolerance is to blame when scholars belittle and disparage each others' work, and criticise hastily, adversely, and unjustly. Of these despicable vices, Zunz showed not a trace. He had an open mind for all views, even for those not accordant with the bent of his own ideas. He did not obstinately maintain his own opinion against sound reason. He welcomed every intellectual production, and encouraged and stimulated every student. His ear and heart were always ready to receive truth, whether it came from a renowned or obscure source.

One more quality I will finally note: Zunz never cared to write critical notices of contemporary work. I do not remember ever to have seen a critique by him on a new publication. When I brought out my *Hebrew History of Jewish Tradition*—I do not, at the present moment, remember whether it was the first or second part in connection with which the incident I am about to relate occurred—I sent him a copy, and in the letter which accompanied the presentation, asked him to favour me with his opinion of my work. He replied in eulogistic terms, such as I had hardly dared to anticipate, but added: "Your wish that I should write a critique [evidently misunder-

standing my request] is one to which I cannot accede. To write critical notices on new books was never my *métier*." How wise was this self-denying ordinance! No office is more ungrateful than that of a critic. I have noticed in the press the writings of over a hundred authors, and in every case vexation has been the result of my labours. Authors' whims are enough to make one weep. One man writes a book; another examines it and gives an honest judgment, praising temperately its merits. But what is the poor critic to do with the faults and positive inaccuracies and errors? Are the blemishes to be glossed over for the sake of the author? And yet many knights of the pen are so hypersensitive that they cannot bear it to be said that their books contain errors. Others, have I seen, who knock at the scholar's doors and humbly beg: "Oh, dear critic, deign to notice my work, proclaim its praises." The critic, good-naturedly notices the work, but his honesty will not permit him to hide its faults, and so he earns the author's undying hatred. Zunz acted wisely in refraining from all criticisms on contemporary literature.

Summarising the virtues of the hero of this sketch, I would say that he was of "noble temper," that he loved his fellow-men and endeavoured to guide their steps to the Thora, that he was an honest worker, a fruitful explorer. Not more than bare justice was done him in the eulogy which I published at his death, in which I said that "his work still lives and will live for ever. His memory will never fade." Israel will honour, to the last generation, the man who devoted all his energies, during the whole of his life, to the study, elucidation, and exposition of the literature of Judaism.

I. H. WEISS.